INTRODUCTION
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Human society is dynamic, either it is highly developed industrialized society characterized by organic solidarity based on differences; or simple society characterized by mechanical solidarity based on likeness or similarity. No society is static. Dynamism i.e., nature, direction and speed of change of a society is determined by a number of factors. The structural and functional system of existing society is the result of a long historical process conditioned by variety of factors. These factors may be religious, political, economic, advent of new people, ideas and civilization, invasion, socio-cultural contact etc. Social change is a continuous process. Proper understanding of a society needs systematic study on the historical process of change conditioned by variety of factors. The studies devoid of all the relevant factors would mislead our understanding on the society we are going to study. In fact studies of any discipline cannot go alone keeping other disciplines aside and studies complete only in correlation and coordination with other relevant subjects. Earlier studies of Indian society, history, religion, race, caste, language ignored these interdisciplinary interdependence aspects of reality. The information discovered by the recent studies conducted on Indian societies on the basis of interdisciplinary approaches focus a totally different picture replacing many of the traditional views on Indian society as null and void. Since the beginnings of the 19th century and till now lot of studies, different in kinds and nature have been made on Bodo society, culture, language, history and civilizations like ethnographical, anthropological, socio-cultural, historical, philological etc. All these historical perspective of the Bodo society are discussed in the chapter I.

Most of the studies are insisting on difference and distinctiveness of the Bodos ignoring the aspects likeness and affinities with other Indian societies and their contributions to ancient Indian society, culture and civilization. These people have great share in the construction of Hindu civilization and demographic structure of Hindu populations. This study insists on the aspects of similarities and affinities of the Bodos with other groups, Hindus and others from evolutionary and historical
point of view. The area of this study covers social changes in different aspects of the Bodo society like, culture, religion, ethnicity, language, economic system, political system, race, history etc. since prehistoric time.

The Bodo people do not have written history of their own. Classical Indian literatures provide us a lot of information regarding prehistoric civilization of the Kirata-Bodo people. We cannot accept all these information as it is. The historicity of the classical Indian literatures is to be tested and supported by archaeology, religion, and language, political system, economic system, culture, tradition, geography etc. of the people living in this vast region since prehistoric time. We cannot say with certainty about the history of the society, culture, civilization of the Bodos and their allied groups. Information based on interdisciplinary approaches provides us some genuine premises on the basis of which we can understand about the migration, settlement, and extension of culture and civilization of the Bodo people since prehistoric time. The information collected so far from classical Indian literature and the archaeological evidences are not interpreted properly and failed to expose the actual history of the autochthonous people and their contribution to Indian culture, history and civilization. Though it is impossible to reconstruct the Bodo culture and society in its original forms and characters with the areas they established civilization in the past with glories and pride; but at least we can make an honest endeavour to reconstruct their history as it was and help understanding their relation with other groups. In the First Chapter, “Historical Perspectives” ethnographic descriptions of the Bodos are made in brief. Extensive discussion is made on migration, transmigration, and areas of settlement in which they established kingdoms and domination of the Bodos and other Kirata-Mongoloid groups in different parts of India since prehistoric time.

Great writers on ethnography, history, language, anthropology, religion, society etc. identify Bodo people as distinct from the rest of the Indian people socio-culturally, racially and linguistically. Recent studies conducted on the origin, growth, development and change in Indian societies, extension of Aryan culture, language, religion, and traditions, turned this proposition as a fallacy. Rather it is clearly exposed that the complete segregation of the Kirata-Bodo people from Aryan, Austric and Dravidian speaking people or Vis a Vis, linguistically, racially, socio-culturally and demographically is historically and scientifically quite unrealistic. Complete segregating of these people from Aryans and other neighbouring people is quite unscientific. Racial and socio-cultural fusion of the Bodos and other Kirata-Mongoloids have been explained in chapter-II based on the
scientific and multidisciplinary approaches conducted by different scholars in America and Europe in last two decades of the 20th century. In this chapter, other factors like geographical environment (altitude, latitude, temperature, heat, cold, rain, forest, river, and ecology), acceptance of new culture, religion, ideas, habits, availability of food etc are also taken into consideration and how they used to exert influence on the gradual physical variation of the people living in a particular area or location. Variation in Physical feature of man is not only determined by mutation or gene but also determined by other factors. Without interbreeding also there can be physical variation in human organism due to influence of certain physical and socio-cultural circumstances.

Different scholars termed the non-Aryan language as Asura or Pisacha or Mleccha form of language. Aryan people popularly termed the non-Aryan language as Milakha Bhasa. The absorption of non-Aryan speaking people by the process of Aryanisation of language and religion continued up to the coming of the British people. According to Chatterjee, major sections of the Bengali and Assamese speaking people are derived from the people of Bodo origin. The morphological, physiological and structural analysis of Indo-Aryan languages shows large number of Tibeto-Burman and other Non-Aryan elements in Sanskrit and other Indo-Aryan languages. Morphological and physiological studies on Assamese and Bengali language show that large numbers of elements of Bodo language are found in these two languages. Aryanisation in language and linguistic affinities of the Bodos are discussed in chapter-III.

The process of Sanskritisation covers imitation of Hindu ideals and conversion to Hinduism. The imitation often brought partial change in different aspects social structure; on the other hand conversion commonly replaces the total structural and functional system of the society. The total changes brought in the structural and functional system of a society through the acceptance of Hinduism is defined as the ‘Process of Absorption of Tribes and non-Hindus into the fold of Hindu’. These two processes bring thousands of Bodo people into mainstream Bengali and Assamese society or even more to other societies. The second phase of the Deconstruction started with the advent of Islam and it was the last and greatest wave of Deconstruction that ever came and swept over the Bodo society. Since the advent, growth and development of Aryan culture, language and civilization in India continued constantly for thousands years, the Bodos and other Indo-Mongoloid people had been in the constant process of socio-cultural absorption under Aryanisation of language, religion and culture. The great variety of social changes that have ever
taken place in structural and functional system of the Bodo Society within the jurisdiction of the concept of Sanskritisation/Aryanisation and Hinduisation is discussed in chapter-IV. It covers basically the process of Hinduisation in different forms, Sanskritisation, Hinduisation, Vaisnav movement etc.

19th century studies on Indian society and religion give us impression that caste system was fixed for all time and divided Indian people into certain fixed caste categories, higher and lower. The 19th century concept of Aryan and non-Aryan, stratification of Indian people, is also very much influence by the concept of caste and race prejudice. The recent studies conducted by social scientists on the origin and development of caste system in their actual forms and functioning in rural India shows that, caste is a functionally arrange socio-cultural group and it has nothing to do with race. Horizontal mobility of Sanskritisation says about absorption of non-Hindu people within the structure of Hindu society alienating their original ethnic identity. Vertical mobility of Sanskritisation says about the gradual movements of low caste or tribe people from lower caste status to higher caste status in the caste hierarchy. Achievement of high caste status is a long historical process conditioned by religious, economic and political power, numerical strength and other socio-cultural factors. Hence segregation of people putting non-Hindus and low caste people in the category of non-Aryan, and elite and upper caste sections of society in Aryan or Caucasoid has no scientific basis.

Physical traits, the primary basis of the theory of race are often confused by the affinity of religion, language and culture. Biological traits of the people of 20th century as the basis of racial stratification will not help us in identifying original racial and linguistic affinity. Migration, settlement, transmigration, influence of geographical and socio-cultural environment, advent of new culture, availability of food and changing food habit etc have great influence on physical variation. Frequency of gene in skin colour, hair, blood, bone and other physical traits are subject to variation and change under different geographical and socio-cultural circumstances even without the mixture of blood. Earlier explanation to physical variation was simply attributed to mutation and admixture of blood or interbreeding. Eastern countries, the tabooed land, remained isolated socio-culturally for thousands of years from the mainland India. Even before the advent of Aryan tradition in Eastern countries physical variation occurred amongst the people of Southern areas of the Eastern countries due to geographical, economic and socio-cultural factors. And that variation in physical traits is still
being occurring. The present Bodos, within coming three-four generations, will completely lose their ancestral Kirata-Mongoloid physical traits and develop Austric or mixed Mongolo-Dravidi and mixed Austric-Caucasoid, mixed Caucaso-Mongoloid type of physiognomy. Interbreeding is not the only condition for biological variation.

Hindu classical literatures considered Varna system or Caste stratification as the creation of God. The 19th Century Orientalists and Indologists explained both the Varna and the Caste stratification as the result of racism i.e., some races are physically, mentally and socio-culturally superior to the other and their blood is purer than the rest; and higher caste are brought under Aryan race and lower castes are brought under non-Aryan race. According to them some races are physically, mentally and socio-culturally superior to the other. But recent studies show that the theory of race has no scientific basis and so also the concept of Aryanism is not a racial phenomenon but a cultural and linguistic phenomenon. As a process of acculturation, Aryanism was extended to non-Aryan cultural groups through the process of Sanskritisation and Hinduisation. Aryanism was extended not only towards the east or northeast but also to the north, west, south and in all directions.

The role of wealth and property, economic and political power and numerical strength of population in the origin and development of caste system was not taken into consideration in the study of Indian society. But it is found that it is the Political and the economic power that played vital roles in the origin and development of caste system in India.

The Middle part of Indian history is identified with Muslim Rule. Long history has been written on Muslim rule. But only a little has been said about the process of Islamisation in India. In Indian history it is shown as if all the Muslim people came from Asia Minor countries and imposed Islam religion on the indigenous people of India by force. Islam was extended in different parts of India rather more extensively not by force but due to other reasons like, its egalitarian principle, i.e., equality of men before God and love and brotherhood among men as against the caste inequality of Hindu Society. As a religion, it appeared more liberal and less exploitative and more attractive for common people in comparison to caste based Hindu religion. It is seen that many of the ruling dynasties of Eastern India (Greater Bengal) converted to Islam along with their subjects and the major section of these people came from Kirata-Bodo group. Linguistic, archaeological and historical
evidences also support this proposition. Pre-British Indian societies were exposed to free and easy excess for Islamisation. From 1199 to the establishment of British Empire in Bengal, more than one third of the total population of Bengal converted into Islam. With the arrival of the British people in India the process of Islamisation completely stopped. Systematic study is required for the discovery of the Islamisation amongst the Bodos. Only some indistinct information is provided regarding conversion of the Bodos into Islam in chapter V.

The arrival of the British people in India and institutionalization of Indian society with western political, economic, administrative, education, legal system and advent of western ideas and philosophy, culture and civilization brought a new dimension to Indian society. Rediscovery of ancient India by the oriental scholars, historians, ethnographers, linguists, administrators, planners, geographers, archaeologists, sociologists, anthropologists threw new lights on the culture, society and history of the people of India. Rediscovery of ancient history grew socio-cultural and ethnic consciousness amongst many groups that were on the brink of extinction. British rule created new conditions of freedom, which encouraged the people of different communities to come out from the shackle of traditional bondage of caste domination and dominations of the absolute kings and Sultans. Origin and role of Hindu Reform organizations on the one hand and Muslim league on the other hand split the Hindus and Muslims unity into two psychologically separate groups.

The Christian missionaries started their humble beginning of the evangelical works in South India, especially, amongst the depressed castes and communities, and slowly extended their activities in other parts of India. The evangelical work that was started among the Santhals of Bihar extended slowly to the Bodo people of Bengal and Assam. Missionaries under different denominations carried evangelical works particularly amongst the Bodos. An effort has been made to depict a clear picture of the origin and development of Christianity amongst the Bodos in chapter VI. Hindu socio-religious reformation movement, which was started in the second half of the 19th century adversely, affected the process of Christianisation throughout India and so also amongst the Bodo. The Brahma Dharma movement is considered as beginning of the socio-cultural renaissance amongst the Bodos The Brahma Dharma movement, which was started as the religious and Socio-cultural reform movement in the beginning of the 20th century slowly after the independence gained a new dimension and developed into an identity movement. The origin of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha in the year 1952 is a landmark in the history of the socio-cultural movement of the Bodo People.
The role of Bodo Sahitya Sabha and the Brahma Dharma movement created an identity consciousness and intellectual environment in which the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) and the Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) came into being in the year 1963. The present achievement of the Bodo society in the field of language, literature, education, culture, economics and politics is result of the relentless efforts of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha, All Bodo Students Union and allied organizations. The Sympathetic attitude of the Govt. of Assam as well as Govt. of India is also to be accounted as important factors contributing to this achievement. When there was Brahma Dharma movement, on a parallel way there occurred New Vaisnava movement in Assam and thousands of Bodos were converted into Vaisnavism and assimilated into greater Assamese society. That part of history was not recorded in the socio-cultural history of Assam. The phase of reconstruction of the Bodo society that was started with the establishment of British rule and comes to end with the movement for political autonomy is discussed in chapter VII under the head of Quest of Self-Identity. In chapter VIII a brief discussion has been made on recent trends in Social change, affect of westernizations and modernization on the Bodo society.

The area of the study covers diverse fields like history, culture, religion, language, ethnography, anthropology, polity, sociology of the Bodos and non-Bodos of Eastern and Northeastern India. A historical and analytical method is undertaken in this study.

Through this study effort has been made to find out affinities of the Bodos primarily to Indo-Aryan speaking people of India linguistically, historically, socio-culturally and other ways in the processes of Social Changes since Pre-historic time. Study will also assess the contribution of the Bodo people to Indian history and civilization.